4.

THE CASE OF Indifferent Things Used in the WORSHIP of GOD,

Proposed and Stated, by considering these QUESTIONS.

Qu. I. Whether things Indifferent, though not Prescribed, may be Lawfully used in Divine Worship? [or, Whether there be any things Indifferent in the Worship of God?]

Qu. II. Whether a restraint of our Liberty in the use of such Indifferent things be a violation of it?

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Queſtion.

Q. *Whether things not preſcribed in the Word of God, may be Lawfully uſed in Divine Worſhip?*

BEfore I proceed to the Caſe it ſelf, it will be fit to conſider what the things are which the Queſtion more immediately reſpects. For the better underſtanding of which, we may obſerve,

1. That there are Eſſential parts of Divine Worſhip, and which are, either by Nature or Revelation, ſo determined, that they are in all Ages neceſſary: In Natural Religion, ſuch are the Objects of it, which muſt be Divine; ſuch are the acknowledgments of Honour, and Reverence, due and peculiar to thoſe Objects, as Prayer, &c. And in the Chriſtian Religion, ſuch are the Sacraments of Baptiſm, and the Lord's Supper. Theſe are always to be the ſame in the Church.

2. There are other things relating to Divine Worſhip, which are arbitrary and variable, and determined according to circumſtances, as Geſture, Place, &c.

As to the former it's grantedby the contending Parties, that they are all already preſcribed, and that nothing in that kind can be added to what is already preſcribed, nor can any thing ſo preſcribed be altered, or aboliſhed. Nothing now can be made neceſſary and binding to all Perſons, Places, and Ages, that was not ſo from the beginning of Chriſtianity; and nothing that was once made ſo by Divine Authority can be rendred void or unneceſſary by any other.

Therefore the Queſtion is to be applied to the latter, and then it's no other than, *Whether things in their own nature Indifferent, though not preſcribed in the Word of God, may be lawfully uſed in Divine Worſhip?* Or, *Whether there be any thing Indifferent in the Worſhip of God?*

Toward the reſolution of which, I ſhall

1. Enquire into the Nature, and ſtate the Notion of things Indifferent.

2. Shew that things Indifferent may be Lawfully uſed in Divine Worſhip.

3. Conſider how we may know what things are Indifferent in the Worſhip of God.

4. How we are to Determine our ſelves in the uſe of Indifferent things ſo applied.

5. Shew that there is nothing required in the Worſhip of God in our Church, but what is either Neceſſary in it ſelf, and ſo binding to all Chriſtians; or what is Indifferent, and ſo may be Lawfully uſed by them.

1. *I ſhall enquire into the Nature, and ſtate the Notion of things Indifferent.* In doing of which we are to obſerve, that all things with reference to Practice are reducible to theſe three Heads:

Firſt, Duty.

Secondly, Sin.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Neither Duty nor Sin.

Duty is either ſo Morally, and in its own Nature, or made ſo by Divine and Poſitive Command. Sin is ſo in its own Nature, or made and declared to be ſuch by Divine and Poſitive Prohibition. Neither Duty nor Sin, is that which no Law, either of Nature or Revelation, hath determined; and is uſually known by the Name of *Indifferent*, that is, it's of a middle Nature, partaking in it ſelf of neither extremes, and may be indifferently uſed or forborn, as in Reaſon and Prudence ſhall be thought meet. Things of this kind the Apoſtle calls *Lawful*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 23. *&c.* becauſe they are the ſubject of no Law, and what are therefore Lawful to us, and which without Sin we may either chuſe or refuſe. Thus the Apoſtle doth determine, *Rom.* 4. 15. *Where no Law is there is no Tranſgreſſion*, that is, it can be no tranſgreſſion to omit that which the Law doth not injoyn, nor to do that which it doth not forbid; for elſe that would be a Duty which the Law doth not injoyn, and that would be a Sin which it doth not forbid; which is in effect to ſay there is a Law where there is none, or that Duty and Sin are ſo without reſpect to any Law. But now if Duty be Duty becauſe it's injoyn'd, and Sin be Sin becauſe it's forbidden, then Indifferent is Indifferent becauſe it's neither injoyn'd nor forbidden. For as to make it a Duty there needs a Command, and to make it a Sin there needs a Prohibition; ſo where there is neither Command nor Prohibition, it's neither Duty nor Sin, and muſt be therefore Indifferent, Lawful, and Free. So that we may as well know by the Silence of the Law what is Indifferent, as we may know by its Authority what is a Duty or a Sin. And I have no more Reaſon to think that a Duty or a Sin which it takes no notice of (ſince all Obligation ariſeth from a Law) than that not to be a Duty or a

Sin which it doth: The Nature of Lawful things being as much determined so to be, by the want of such Authority, as that of Necessary is determined by it: And he that shall say that's a Duty or a Sin which is not so made and declared by any Law, may as well say that's no Duty or Sin which there is a Law about. To conclude, there must be a Law to make it a Transgression, and the want of a Law doth necessarily suppose it to be none, and what there is no Law for or against, remains Indifferent in it self, and Lawful to us. As for instance, suppose there should be a Dispute concerning Days set apart for the Service and Worship of God, how must this be determined but by the Law of Nature or Revelation? and how shall we be resolved in the case, but by considering what the Law injoyns or forbids in it? If we find it not injoyn'd, it can be of it self no Duty; if we find it not forbidden, it can be of it self no Sin; and consequently it's Lawful and Indifferent, and in what we neither Sin by omitting nor observing. So the Apostle concludes, *Rom.* 14. 6. *He that regardeth a day, regardeth it unto the Lord, and he that regardeth not the day, unto the Lord he doth not regard it*; that is, there was no Law requiring it, and so making the observation of it Necessary; and no Law forbidding it, and so making the observation of it Sinful; and therefore Christians were at Liberty to observe, or not to observe it as they pleas'd; and in both they did well, if so be they had *a regard to the Lord* in it.

2. *I shall shew that there are things Indifferent in the Worship of God, and that such things, though not prescribed, may be lawfully used in it.* 'Tis allowed by all that there is no Command to be expected about the Natural Circumstances of action, and which the Service cannot be celebrated without, such as Time and Place, and

and that these are left to humane Prudence to fix and determine. But what those Natural Circumstances are is not so universally agreed to. And if they be such as aforesaid, that is, *such as the action cannot be performed without*, then it will very much serve to justify most of the things in dispute, and defend our Church in the use and practice of them. For what is there almost in that kind amongst us, which is not Naturally or Morally necessary to the action, and if Time and Place fall under humane determination, because they are naturally necessary, then why not also Gesture and Habit, which Worship can no more Naturally be celebrated without, than the former; and consequently a Surplice, or Kneeling and Standing, may be alike lawfully determined, and used, as Time for assembling together, and a Church to assemble and officiate in. And what Natural Circumstances are to a Natural action, that are Moral Circumstances to a Moral action; and there are Moral as necessary to a Moral action, as there are Natural necessary to a Natural action. As for example, what Time and Place are to Natural, that are Method and Order to Moral and Religious acts, and can no more be separated from these than the other can be separated from the former, and therefore the Method and Order of Administration in Divine Worship (where not otherwise determined and appointed by God) may as well be determined by Men, as Time and Place, with respect to the nature, end, and use of the Service. So that the exception made against humane Appointments in Divine Worship, *viz.* (*that all but natural circumstances must have a Divine Command to legitimate their use*; and that *whatever is not prescribed, is therefore prohibited*) is of no service to them that plead it; and it remains good so far notwithstanding, that there are things Indifferent in the Worship of God, and that the outward

Order

Order and Administration of it is left to Christian Prudence And this I shall more particularly prove.

1. From the consideration of the Rules laid down in the Gospel, relating to the administration of Divine Worship which (except what refer to the Elements, &c. in the Sacraments) are taken from the Nature of the thing; and so always were obliging to all Ages under the several variations and forms of Divine Worship, and will be always so to all Christians in the World, *viz.* such as respect *Order*, *Decency* and *Edification*, insisted upon, 1 *Cor.* 14. 26, 40. So that we are no otherwise bound, than as bound by these measures, and where not bound by them we are free. For as in former Ages from the beginning of the World, where revelation did not interpose (as it did under the Mosaical Dispensation) all persons were left at liberty, and if so be they had a respect to those natural rules, might choose what ways they pleased for the regulation of Divine Worship: So when under the Gospel we have no other than those Natural rules (except as above excepted) the particular circumstances are as much now the matter of our free choice, as they were then, and this or that may be used and observed, as the Case requireth and Occasion serves. So that if ever there were things Indifferent in Gods Worship, and the administration of it was left to the Consideration and Prudence of Mankind, it is so still, since the Gospel keeps to those eternal Rules which even the Nature of the Thing hath invariably established, and which, if it ever was sufficient for the guiding of the Church of God in those particulars, is certainly so when the Nature of Man is improved by new helps, and so he is more capable of judging what may be sutable to that essential Worship which God hath prescribed under the Gospel, and to Him whom that Worship is directed to. But then that which confirms

firms this, is that those Rules are also general; and such as will in their use and end respect all People in the World. The Apostles in all their Discourses upon this subject rarely do descend to particulars, and in what they do, shew how far Custom and Charity, and the Reason of the thing ought to govern us; as in the case of mens being Uncovered in the Worship of God, for which the Apostle doth argue not from Institution, but the Nature and Decency of it, being in token of their preheminence, and the headship they have over the Woman, &c. 1 *Cor.* 11. 47. But otherwise they without doubt thought it unpracticable to tye all Nations up to the same Modes and Circumstances, or if practicable that it was not worth the while, when the Worship might as well be Administred, and God as much Honoured by one as the other. Now if they did think it sufficient to prescribe only in this General way, it must needs be that the particulars of those Generals must be Indifferent, and that the chusing of one particular before the other was left to Christian Prudence. And if it should be said (as it is) that *when the things are determined in general, the particulars are therein also vertually determined*, and so are not Indifferent; I shall content my self to reply, that by this way of arguing there would be nothing Indifferent in the World: There being nothing how Lawful and Indifferent soever in it self, but what we are limited by General Rules in the use of. As for example, all Meats are now Lawful to Christians, but yet there are General Rules by which we are determined in the use of them, such as our own Constitution, and our Quality, or Scandal given to others: But the being thus bounded by such Rules, doth not change the Nature of those Meats, and make them to be other than Indifferent. So it is in the Worship of God, for the better

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Administration of which there are general Rules laid down, and according to which we are to be determined in our choice of particulars, but yet the particulars notwithstanding are Indifferent, and matter of Christian Liberty, and what humane prudence is to regulate us in.

All which will yet be further confirmed by considering the Nature of the things which are the Subject of those general Rules, *viz*, *Order*, *Decency* and *Edification*, which do mostly, if not altogether, depend upon variable circumstances, and may be different according to those circumstances; sometimes this, and at other times that being subservient thereunto. As for instance, Decency doth generally depend upon Custom, and the Custom of Ages and Countries being different, Decency in one Age or Country may be and often is quite different from what it is in another. It was once comely amongst some Nations to be covered in Divine Worship, and practised both amongst the *Jews* in their Synagogues, as the Apostle doth insinuate, 2 *Cor.* 3. 14. and their own Authors do acknowledge (*a*); and also amongst the (*b*) *Romans*. But it was *Comely* amongst others to be Uncovered, as amongst the *Grecians*, (*c*) who in those Times giving Laws of Civility, and in many things of Religion too to other Nations, it became a prevailing Custom, and was, as a thing decent, introduced into the Christian Church. Thus it is also as to *Edification*, which doth in like manner often depend upon circumstances, and according to those circumstances the Edification of the Church in its Peace, Union, and Comfort may be promoted or hindered, and that may be for Edification in one Age or Church, which is not so in another.

(*a*) Lightf. Hor. Hebr. in 1 Cor. 11. 4.
(*b*) Plut. Probl. Rom.
(*c*) Macrob. Saturn. l. 3. c. 6.

Thus the being covered in Divine Worship was for Edification in the *Jewish* Church, being used in token

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of Fear and Reverence, Distance and Subjection; in alluſion to which the *Seraphims* are repreſented appearing before God, after that manner, *Iſai.* 6. 2. and in imitation of whom the Apoſtle pleads that Women ſhould be vailed in Religious Aſſemblies, in token of Subjection and Shamefacedneſs, 1 *Cor.* 11. 10. But on the contrary He doth Judge and Determin that, for the Reaſons above given, it was better and more for Edification, that Men ſhould be therein Uncovered. So the *Love-feaſts*, and *Holy-kiſs* of Charity were at the firſt thought good for Edification, and were accordingly uſed in Apoſtolical times, (being an Excellent and Uſeful, Admirable and Friendly, Cuſtom) as thereby was ſignified the Univerſal Love and Charity that Chriſtians ought to maintain, and which they ſhould at all times but eſpecially in Divine Worſhip be forward to expreſs and renew: But when Diſorder and Licentiouſneſs aroſe from them, they were generally laid aſide, and Aboliſhed by Authority.

Chryſoſt. and Theophyl. in 1 Cor. 11. 17. Tertul. Apol. c. 39. de orat. l. 6.

Concil. Laod. c. 28. &c.

So it was thought to be for Edification in the Primitive Church to Adminiſter Baptiſm by immerſion or dipping, and the Apoſtle doth make uſe of it as an excellent argument to newneſs of life, *Rom.* 6. 3, 4. and yet notwithſtanding the ſignification of it, and the practice of the Church for a long time, a Charitable reaſon hath overruled it, and brought in Sprinkling inſtead of it. Thus ſitting at the Lords Supper is accounted decent by ſome, and for Edification, as it's a table poſture, and is a ſign of our being feaſted by God; and yet in a general Synod of the Reformed Churches in *Poland*, &c. it was declared that *foraſmuch as ſitting was introduced firſt by the* Arrians (*beſide the Cuſtom uſed in all the Evangelical Churches throughout* Europe,) *we reject it as peculiar to them* (*that as they do irreverently treat Chriſt, ſo alſo his Sacred appointments*) *and as a Ceremony leſs Comely and*

Synod. Petricov. concluſ. 4. An. 1578.

Devout, and to many very offenſive. So that Order, Decency, and Edification being generally mutable things, and varying as circumſtances vary, there could in the nature of the thing be only general rules preſcribed, and ſo the particulars muſt be left to diſcretion, and to be determined by thoſe that are beſt able and have Authority to judge of the circumſtances, and to pick out of them thoſe which are Indifferent, what may beſt ſerve the ends of Religion, and the honour of its inſtitutions.

2. I ſhall prove that *things Indifferent in themſelves, though not preſcribed, may be Lawfully uſed in Divine Worſhip*, from the practice of our Saviour and his Apoſtles. Under the Law the Conſtitution was very exact, the Rites and Orders of it very particular, and the Obſervation of them punctually required. But as it was not ſo preciſe but that many things reſpecting the outward order were added, ſo ſome things were altered upon prudential conſiderations; and by the addition or alteration of which the Authority of that Law was not conceived to be infringed, nor violated; as it's evident from the reſpect which our Saviour ſhewed to them, and his compliance with them. An inſtance of this is the Synagogual Worſhip; It's a controverſy whether there was any proviſion made under the Law for the places themſelves, the intimations of that are (if any) very obſcure, but there are not ſo much as any intimations of the manner and order or parts of the Worſhip therein to be obſerved; and yet we find ſuch there was, *Acts* 15. 21. Moſes *being read and preached there every Sabbath day*; and that our Saviour frequently reſorted to it and bore a part in it, *John*, 18. 20, &c. The like temper we find him of, when he uſed the Cup of Charity after the manner of the *Jews*, in the Paſſover, though there was no inſtitution for it; and that it was as many other

other things, taken up and used amongst them by way of signification, and as a Testimony of entire Friendship, and Charity, *Luke*, 22. 17. But I conceive alteration of circumstances in the institution is much more exceptionable than the addition of such to it, and yet this was both done by them and observed by our Saviour, when there was nothing else to oblige him, but only a condescension to them in such usages and rites as were inoffensive in themselves, and what were then generally used in the Church. That the posture first required and used in the Passover was standing, the circumstances, being to be eat with Staves in their Hands and Shoes on their Feet, *&c.* do prove, and is affirmed by the *Jews*; and it is as manifest that the *Jews* in the time of our Saviour, and for a long time before, did recede from it, and did eat it in the posture of discumbency; whether it was as they looked upon themselves as settled in the possession of *Canaan*, which they were at the first institution Travelling towards; or, as it's said by the later *Jews*, because it was *a sign of Liberty, and after the manner of Kings and Great men*, is not so material, as it is that our Saviour did follow this Custom, and complied with this practice of theirs without hesitation. And thus did the Apostles when they observ'd the hours of Prayer, *Acts*, 3. 1. which were of humane institution as well as the Prayrs themselves, (for without doubt they were publick Prayers, which were used in the Temple,) but though the place was, yet that service was of no more Authority than what was used in the Synagogues. Now if the *Jews* did thus institute and alter things relating to external Order and Administration, according as the case might require, and it was lawful for them so to do (as it's plain from the compliance of our Saviour and the Apostles with them in it) then much more may it be supposed lawful for the

Philo. de Sacrif. Able, *&c.*

Lightf. Hor. Matth. c. 26. 20.

Christian Church to exercise that liberty when they have no other than such general rules for their direction as they had then, without such particulars as they had.

And that this is no other than a certain Truth will appear from the same liberty taken in Apostolical times in Religious Assemblies, when the Christian Church not only complied with the *Jews* in such Rites as they were under no Obligation, but that of Charity, to use, and which they did use because they were not forbidden, and so lawful; (as when St. *Paul* took upon him a Vow, *Acts.* 21. 26.) but also had some Observances of its own, that were of a ritual nature, and as they were taken up so might be laid down upon prudential consideration. Such I account was *the Washing the Disciples Feet*, which was done by our Saviour in token of the Humility he was to be a president of, and would have them follow him in; and which it seems was observed amongst them, 1 *Tim.* 5. 10. and for a long time after continued in a sort in some Churches (*a*). Such also were the *Love-feasts* at the Administration of the Lords Supper; and the *Holy-kiss* used then amongst Christians, if not as a constant attendant upon all publick Worship, yet to be sure at Prayer (*b*). Which and the like usages, however taken up, yet were in the Opinion of the Church no other than Indifferent, and accordingly were upon the abuse of them (as I observed before) discarded. From all which it appears, that there was no such thing as Prescription expected before any Rite should be introduced into the Church, or before it would be lawful for Christians to use it, but that where it was not forbidden, the Practice of the Church was to determine them; and if Prescription had been thought necessary for every thing used in Divine Worship, which was not Natural, then certainly our Saviour

(*a*) Ambros. Tom. 4. l. 3. de Sacrament. c. 1.

(*b*) Tertul. de orat. c. 14.

our and his Apoſtles would never have uſed or encouraged others to uſe any thing that wanted ſuch Authority, and that was not of Divine Inſtitution.

Now if it ſhould be objected that theſe uſages of the Chriſtian Church were *Civil obſervances, and uſed as well out of God's Worſhip as in it*; and therefore what there needed no inſtitution for, and might be lawfully uſed without. I anſwer 1. That this doth juſtify moſt of the uſages contended for, and there would be nothing unlawful in uſing a White Garment, &c. in Divine Service, ſince that *as a ſign of Royalty and Dignity* was uſed in Civil as well as Religious caſes, and according to this Argument may therefore lawfully be uſed in Religious, becauſe it was in Civil. Ames. Freſſr Suit, l. 2. Sect. 23. &c. p. 334. Caſaub. Exercit. 16. c. 73.

Secondly, They muſt ſay that either a Civil obſervance, when uſed in Religious Worſhip, remains Civil, notwithſtanding its being ſo applied, or that it's Religious whilſt ſo applied; if the former then Kneeling or Standing in the Worſhip of God would be no acts of Adoration and not be Religious, becauſe thoſe poſtures are uſed in Civil matters; if the latter, then it muſt be granted that there may be Rites uſed in the Worſhip of God and to a Religious end, which there is no Divine Preſcription for.

Nay Thirdly, It's evident that theſe and the like were not uſed by the Chriſtians as meer Civil Rites; this I think is made evident, as to Waſhing the Feet, by a Learned Perſon (*a*); and not only was the kiſs of Charity called the *Holy-kiſs* in Scripture, but by the Fathers, (notwithſtanding what is (*b*) objected) *the Seal of Prayer*, and *the Seal of Reconciliation*, and both conſiſtent, the one as it was an attendant upon that office, the other as it was a teſtimony of their Charity and Reconciliation to each other in it. (*a*) Buxtorf. Exercit. Hiſt. Sacr. Cœnæ (*b*) Ames. ibid. p. 342. n. XXX.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, If the being Civil uſages did make them which were originally ſo, to be lawful in or at Divine Worſhip, then there is nothing that is uſed out of Worſhip in Civil caſes and affairs, but may be introduced into the Church; ſince if it be for that reaſon that any uſages of that kind are defended, the reaſon will as well defend all as one. And then the Hiſtrionical Practices of the Church of *Rome* might warantably be introduced, as the *rocking of a Babe in a Cradle at night, at the Nativity time; the Harrowing of Hell at Eaſter*, &c. Then *a Maypole may be brought into the Church for Children to Dance about and Climb up on, in ſign of their deſire to ſeek the things above; and a ſtiff Straw put into the Childs Hand, for a ſign of Fighting againſt Spiritual Enemies, as with a Spear*; And all the abſurdities of that Nature charged injuriouſly upon our Proceedings (*a*) would return with ſucceſs upon themſelves: Since all theſe are fetched from Cuſtoms and Practices in Secular matters.

(*a*) Ames. ibid. l. 1. c. 3. p. 17.

Fifthly, If this be a reaſon to Defend the Uſe of Rites in the Chriſtian Church, *becauſe they are uſed out of it, and in Civil caſes*; then what will become of that poſition, before ſpoken of, and generally aſſerted by thoſe who oppoſe us, that *nothing is to be uſed in the Worſhip of God without Preſcription, except the Natural Circumſtances of Action*; for though Civil and Natural are ſometimes coincident, yet they may be and often are Separated; for Feaſting and Salutation are Civil uſages, but are no Natural Circumſtances in Divine Worſhip, and which that cannot be performed without. And if theſe and the like were uſed in the Church, and applied and annexed to Divine Worſhip; then the reaſon upon which they were introduced and uſed doth, wherever that reaſon is, juſtify the like Practice, and we are left ſtill to chooſe and act according to the Permiſſion and Allowance that

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is given us; that is, all such things that are not forbidden are just matter of our Christian Liberty, and there is no Sin in a Prudent exercise of it.

3. I shall further prove and strengthen the Proposition, that *things Indifferent, though not prescribed, may be lawfully used in Divine Worship*, from the ill consequences attending the contrary; one of which is, that if we hold all things not commanded to be prohibited, we shall find no Church or Religious Society in the World but are Guilty; and if the doing so makes Communion with a Church unlawful, there is no Church we can hold Communion with. There are some Churches that do maintain and use such things as the Scripture expresly condemns, and do lay aside such as the Scripture requires; as the Church of *Rome*, in its Worshipping Saints and Angels, and denying the Cup to the Laity, *&c.* And these things make it necessary for those to quit its Communion that are of it, and for those to avoid it that are not in it. But other Churches there are that are Guilty of no such Fundamental Errors and fatal miscarriages, and may so far lawfully be Communicated with. But even none of these are there, but what, either wittingly or unwittingly, do take the liberty of using what the Scripture hath no where required. It was notoriously so in the Ancient Church when some Customs did universally obtain amongst them; as the Anniversary Solemnities of the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ, and Descent of the Holy-Ghost, the receiving of the Lords Supper Fasting; (*a*) the Praying toward the East (*b*); the Standing in their Devotions on the Lords Days, (*c*) especially from *Easter* to *Whitsuntide*; the Dipping the Baptized thrice in Water (*d*), *&c.*. Now whatever some of the Fathers might plead for any of these from Scriptures misunderstood, yet it's plain that none of these are required in

(*a*) Aug. Epis. 118. Januar.
(*b*) Basil. de Spir. S. c. 27.
(*c*) Aug. Epis. 119. Januar.
(*d*) Ambros. lib. 2. de Sacrament. c. 7.

in Scripture, and if ſo, a Perſon that holds it unlawful to uſe any thing uncommanded, and to hold Communion with a Church ſo uſing, muſt have ſeparated from the Catholick Church, ſince (if there be Credit to be given to the Fathers ſo reporting) they all agreed in the uſe and practice of the things above recited. And he that held all fixed Holy-Days of Eccleſiaſtical Inſtitution unlawful, and all Ceremonies not inſtituted by God to be prohibited, muſt not have Worſhipped with them, who did not only thus do, but thought it unlawful, when univerſally Practiſed to do otherwiſe.

But again as there were ſome Rites univerſally held in eſtimation, ſo there were others that were peculiar to ſome Churches, and that were not thought to be obliging out of that Particular Communion, as when in the Church of *Rome* it was the Cuſtom to Faſt on the Saturday; and of moſt others to make no ſuch diſtinction betwixt that and other days. (*a*) In the Church of *Milain* they Waſhed the Feet of thoſe that were to be Baptized, but in the Church of *Rome*, they uſed it not (*b*). Now if perſons did believe ſuch things unlawful, they could have no Communion with any particular Church, becauſe no Church was without ſuch Uncommanded Rites; or if they could be ſo fond as to think the Rites of their own Church to be of Divine Inſtitution, yet how could they have Communion with a Church, where the contrary Cuſtom did prevail, as in the caſes aboveſaid. And as it was then, ſo it is now with all ſtated and ſettled Churches in the World, who do Practiſe againſt this Principle, and either expect not or are not able to find a Command for every thing eſtabliſhed amongſt them; and that Practiſe with as much contrariety to each other as the Church of *Rome* and *Milain* once did. So in ſome Churches they receive the Lord's Supper

(*a*) Aug. Epiſt. 118.

(*b*) Ambroſ. l. 3. de Sacrament. c. 1.

Supper Kneeling, in ſome Standing, in others Sitting. In ſome they Sprinkle the Child in Baptiſm but once, and in others thrice. Now there would be no reconciling of theſe one to another, and no poſſibility of holding Communion with them under theſe circumſtances, or of being a Member of any Church, if we muſt have an inſtitution for every thing done in the Worſhip of God, and that we muſt joyn in nothing, which has it not. As for Inſtance what Church is there in the World, which has not ſome form or forms of Prayer, and whoſe Service for the moſt part (generally ſpeaking) is not made up of them; eſpecially that doth not uſe them in the Adminiſtration of the Sacraments. But now if a Perſon holds that whatever is not preſcribed is unlawful, and that forms of Prayer are no where preſcribed, then he cannot joyn with the Church ſo uſing, but while in the body of the Church by reſidence, he muſt be no Member of that Body in Communion.

Nay further, if this be true, then none muſt hold Communion with them who are of this Opinion; ſince thoſe that pretend moſt to it, and urge it as a reaſon againſt Communion with us, live in contradiction to it, and do Practiſe and Uſe things which they have no more Authority, nor can give more reaſon for, than we do for the things they condemn, and that is, that they are lawful, expedient, and convenient. As for Example, let us conſider the Sacraments, in which, if any thing, we might expect particular Preſcription, becauſe they are meer Inſtitutions; where do they find that the Baptized Perſon is neceſſarily to be Sprinkled? What Command or Example have they for it, or what reaſon more than the reaſon of the thing taken from expedience and the general Practice of the Church of God in colder Climates? And yet this is as much uſed amongſt them that pretend to keep exactly to the Rule

of Scripture, as it is amongſt us that take a liberty in things Uncommanded; but with this difference, that they do it upon the ſuppoſition of a Command, and ſo make it neceſſary, and our Church leaves it, as it is, Indifferent. Again, where do they find a Command for Sitting at the Lord's Supper, or ſo much as an Example? (For the Poſture of our Saviour is left very uncertain.) Where again do they find a Command for the neceſſary uſe of conceived Prayer, and that that, and no other, ſhould be uſed in the publick Worſhip of God? And that they muſt prove that maintain publick Forms unlawful. Where again do they find it required that an Oath is to be taken by laying the Hand on the Goſpel and Kiſſing the Book? which is both a Natural and Inſtituted part of Worſhip, being a Solemn Invocation of God and an Appeal to him, with an acknowledgment of his Omniſcience, and Omnipreſence; his Providence and Government of the World; his Truth and Juſtice to Right the Innocent and Puniſh the Guilty; all which is owned and teſtified by Kiſſing that Book that God has declared this more eſpecially in. And if we more particularly deſcend to thoſe that differ from us in this point: Where do thoſe of the Congregational way find that ever Chriſtians were otherwiſe divided from Chriſtians than by place, or that they did combine into particular Churches, ſo as not to be all the while reputed Members of another, and might be admitted, upon removal of place, upon the ſame terms that they were of that they removed from; or indeed that they were ſo Members of a particular as not to be Members of any or the whole Church of Chriſt, upon their being Baptized? Where do they find that Chriſtians were gathered out of Chriſtians, and did combine into a Society Excluding thoſe from it that would not make a Profeſſion of their Faith and Converſion diſtinct from

that

that at Baptiſm? Where do we ever read that he that was a Miniſter of one Church was not a Miniſter all the World over, as well as he that was Baptized in one was reputed a Chriſtian and Church-Member wherever he came? Again, where do we read that its neceſſary that Miniſters ſhould be alike in Authority, Power, and Juriſdiction, and that there is to be no difference in point of Order and Superiority amongſt them: Or that there are to be Elders for Governing the Church, who are not Ordained to it, and are in no other State after than they were before that Service, both of which are held by the Presbyterians, ſtrictly ſo called? And if it be ſaid theſe reſpect Government but not Worſhip; I anſwer the caſe is the ſame, for if we are to do nothing but what is preſcribed in the Worſhip of God, becauſe, (as they ſay) it derogates from the Prieſtly Office of Chriſt, and doth detract from the Sufficiency of Scripture; then I ſay upon the like reaſon, there muſt be nothing uſed in Church Government but what is preſcribed, ſince the Kingly Office is as much concerned in this as the Prieſtly in the other, and the Sufficiency of Scripture in both. Laſtly, Where do any of them find that poſition in Scripture, that *there is nothing lawful in Divine Worſhip but what is preſcribed*, and that *what is not Commanded is Forbidden*? And if there be no ſuch poſition in Scripture, then that can no more be true than the want of ſuch a poſition can render things not Commanded to be unlawful.

And now I am come to that which muſt put an Iſſue one way or other to the diſpute; for if there be no ſuch poſition in Scripture, either expreſſed in it, or to be gathered by good conſequence from it, we have gain'd the point: but if there be, then we muſt give it up. And this is indeed contended for. For its Objected,

That its accounted in Scripture an hainous Crime *Object. 1.*

to do things *not Commanded*; as when *Nadab* and *Abihu* *offered ſtrange Fire before the Lord, which he Commanded them not*, &c. From which form of expreſſion it may be collected, that what is not Commanded is Forbidden; and that in every thing uſed in Divine Worſhip there muſt be a Command to make it lawful and allowable.

Levit. 10. 1, &c.

Anſw. I. To this I anſwer that the Propoſition infer'd, *that all things not Commanded are Forbidden*, is not true, and ſo it cannot be the Sence and Meaning of the Phraſe; for 1. then all things muſt be either Commanded or Forbidden; and there would be nothing but what muſt be Commanded or Forbidden; but I have before ſhewed, and it muſt be granted, that there are things neither Commanded nor Forbidden, which are called Indifferent. 2. if things not Commanded are Forbidden, then a thing not Commanded is alike Hainous as a thing Forbidden. And then *David*'s Temple which he deſigned to Build would have been Criminal as well as *Jeroboam*'s *Dan* and *Bethel*; and the Feaſt of (*a*) *Purim*, like *Jeroboam*'s Eighth Month (*b*); and the Synogogal Worſhip like the Sacrificing in Gardens (*c*); and the hours of Prayer (*d*) like *Nadab*'s Strange Fire. The former of which were things Uncommanded, and the latter Forbidden; and yet They were approved and Theſe condemned.

(*a*) Eſth. 9. 27.
(*b*) 1 King. 12. 32, 33.
(*c*) Iſai. 65. 3.
(*d*) Act. 3. 1.

2. The things, to which this Phraſe *not Commanded* is applied, do give no encouragement to ſuch an Inference from it; for its conſtantly applied to ſuch as are abſolutely Forbidden. This was the caſe of *Nadab* and *Abihu*, who offered Fire not meerly Uncommanded, but what was prohibited; which will appear, if we conſider that the Word *Strange* when applied to matters of Worſhip doth ſignify as much as Forbidden. Thus we read of *Strange Incenſe*, that is, other than what was compounded

Exod. 30. 9.

pounded according to the directions given for it; which as it was to be put to no common uſes, ſo no common perfume was to be put to the like uſes with it. So we alſo read of *Strange Vanities*, which is but another Word for *Graven Images*; and of *Strange Gods*. And after the ſame ſort is it to be underſtood in the caſe before us, *viz.* for what is Forbidden. For that ſuch was the Fire made uſe of by thoſe Young Men will be further confirm'd, if we conſider that there is ſcarcely any thing belonging to the Altar (Setting aſide the Structure of it) of which more is ſaid than of the Fire burning upon it. For 1. It was lighted from Heaven (*a*). 2. It was always to be burning upon the Altar. (*b*) 3. If it was not made uſe of in all Sacred matters (where Fire was to be uſed) yet it was moſt Holy, and when Atonement was to be made by Incenſe, the Coals were to be taken from thence (*c*), and therefore ſurely was as peculiar to thoſe Offices as the Incenſe, and to be as conſtantly uſed in them, as never to be uſed in any other. And it will yet make it more evident if it be conſidered 4. That juſt before there is an account given of the Extraordinary way by which this Fire was lighted, for the Text ſaith, there *came out a Fire from before the Lord, and conſumed upon the Altar the Burnt-Offering*, &c. and immediately follows the Relation of *Nadab*'s miſcarriage. Now for what reaſon are theſe things ſo cloſely connected, but to ſhew wherein they Offended. For before it was the Office of *Aaron*'s Sons to put Fire upon the Altar, and now through Inadvertency or Preſumption Attempting to do as formerly, when there had been this Declaration from Heaven to the contrary, they Suffered for it. 5. It appears further from the conformity betwixt the Puniſhment and the Sin; as *there came Fire from before the Lord and conſumed the Burnt-Offering*; to teach them

Ver. 34. Ch. 37. 29. Jer. 8. 19.

(*a*) Lev. 9. 24.

(*b*) Ch. 6. 12.

(*c*) Lev. 16. 12. 46.

Lev. 9. 24.

Lev. 1. 7.

them what Fire for the future to make uſe of: So upon their Tranſgreſſion *there came* out Fire from the Lord and devoured them; to teach others how Dangerous it was to do otherwiſe than he had Commanded. So that it ſeems to me to be like the caſe of *Uzzah*, when they carried the Ark in a Cart, which the *Levites* were to have born upon their Shoulders; and it was not an Offering without a Command, but otherwiſe than Commanded, that was their Fault; and without doubt they might with no more Offence have taken what Fire they would for their Incenſe, than what Wood they pleaſed for their Fire, if there had been no more direction about the one than the other. But to proceed in the other places of Scripture where this Phraſe of *not Commanded* is to be met with, its alſo ſo applied to things Forbidden; as to what is called *Abomination*, which is the Worſhipping of *Strange Gods, the Sun, Moon and Stars, and the Hoſt of Heaven: To the building the High Places of* Topheth, *and the burning their Sons and Daughters in the Fire to* Baal, *and cauſing them to paſs through the Fire unto* Molech. Of ſuch and the like its ſaid, *which I Commanded them not, neither came it into my mind.* And laſtly it's applied to the falſe Prophets, who *ſpake Lies in the name of the Lord*; in which caſe the meer being not Commanded nor ſent by him, is in the nature of the thing no leſs than a Prohibition, it being a Belying God; though there had been no ſuch place as, *Deut.* 18. 20. to forbid it. Now if ſo much ſtreſs was to be laid upon the Phraſe, as the Objection doth ſuppoſe, and that we muſt take a Non-Commanding for a Prohibition, we might reaſonably expect to find the Phraſe otherwhere applied to things that were no otherwiſe Unlawful than becauſe not Commanded; but when its always ſpoken of things plainly Prohibited, its a ſign that its rather God's Forbidding that made them Unlawful,

1 Chron. 13. 7. 10. Ch. 15. 2.

Deut. 17. 3. 4. Jer. 7. 31. Ch. 19. 5. Ch. 32. 35.

Jer. 29. 22, 23.

ful, than his not Commanding. But it may ſtill be ſaid, why ſhould then the Phraſe be uſed at all in ſuch matters, and why ſhould the caſe be thus Repreſented, if not Commanded is not the ſame with Prohibited?

To this I anſwer, 1. That all things Prohibited are by conſequence not Commanded; but it follows not that all things not Commanded are Prohibited. If it was Forbidden to Offer Strange Fire, then it was a thing not Commanded (for otherwiſe the ſame thing would be Forbidden and Commanded) but if it had been a thing not Commanded only, it would not by being ſo have been any more Prohibited than the Wood that was to be burnt upon the Altar. Now its with reſpect to the former that things Prohibited are call'd things not Commanded; and not with reſpect to the latter. 2. Indeed the Phraſe *not Commanded* is only a Meioſis or Softer way of ſpeaking, when more is underſtood than expreſs'd. A Figure uſual in all Authors and Languages, that I know of, and what is frequently to be met with in Scripture. Thus its given as a Character of an Hypocritical People, *they choſe that in which I Delighted not*, which is but another Word for what was ſaid in the verſe before, *their Soul Delighted in their Abominations*, or Idolatries. And when the Apoſtle would Deſcribe the evil ſtate of the Gentile World, by the moſt Hainous and Flagitious Crimes, *ſuch as Fornication, Covetouſneſs, Malicioufneſs, Envy, Murder*, and what not, he ſaith of theſe, that they were *things not convenient*. And it is as evident that the Phraſe *not Commanded* is of the like kind, when the things its applied to are alike Notorious and Abominable.

Iſai. 66. 3. 4. Ch. 65. 3, 12.

Rom. 1. 28, 29.

But its further Objected, that its ſaid in Scripture, *ye ſhall not add unto the Word which I Command you, neither ſhall ye diminiſh ought from it*: And that our Saviour condemning the Practices of the Scribes in this kind, concludes,

Object. II. Deut. 4. 2.

Matth. 15. 9. concludes, *In Vain do they Worſhip me, Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.* From whence it may be collected 1. That all things not Commanded by God in his Word are additions to it. 2. That ſuch additions are altogether unlawful.

Anſwer. To this I reply,

1. If they mean by *adding to the Word*, the doing what that Forbids, and by *diminiſhing*, the neglecting of what that requires (as the next Words do intimate, and is plainly the ſenſe otherwhere (*a*), when its no ſooner ſaid, *What thing ſoever I Command you, Obſerve to do it*; but it immediately follows, *thou ſhalt not add thereto, nor diminiſh from it*) its what we willingly condemn; according to that of our Saviour, *Whoſoever ſhall break one of theſe leaſt Commandments, and ſhall teach Men ſo, he ſhall be called leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

Deut. 4. 4, 6.

(*a*) Deut. 12. 32.

Matth. 5. 19.

2. If they mean by *adding* the appointing ſomewhat elſe inſtead of what God hath appointed, as *Jeroboam* did the Feaſt of the Eighth Month; and by *diminiſhing*, the taking away what God hath Commanded, as *Ahaz* did the Altar, and Laver, *&c.* This is what we condemn alſo, and do blame in the Church of *Rome*, whilſt they feed the People with Legends inſtead of Scripture, and take away both that and the Cup from the Laity.

2 King. 16. 14, 17.

3. If they mean by *adding*, the adding inſolent expoſitions to the Command, by which the end of it is fruſtrated. This our Saviour condemn'd in the *Phariſees*, *Why do ye Tranſgreſs the Command of God by your tradition? For God Commanded ſaying, Honour thy Father*, &c. *but ye ſay, whoſoever ſhall ſay to his Father, it is a gift*, &c. *Thus ye have made the Commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.* And this we condemn in the Church of *Rome*, who do defeat the Commands of God by their Doctrines of Attrition and Purgatory, *&c.*

Matth. 15. 3.

4. If

4. If they mean by *adding*, the making of that which is not the Word of God to be of equal Authority with it; This our Saviour condemn'd in the *Phariſees*, when they *Taught for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*, and eſteem'd them as neceſſary to be obeyed, and to be of equal force with what was Authorized by him; nay it ſeems, they had more regard to the Tradition of the Elders than the Commandment of God, as our Saviour Inſinuates, verſe, 2, 3. and has been obſerved from their own Authors. This we alſo condemn in the Church of *Rome*, which decrees that the Apocrypha and Traditions ſhould be received *with the like Pious regard, as the Sacred Writ.* Con. Trid. Seſs. 4. Decr. 1.

5. If by *adding* they mean the giving the ſame Efficacy to humane Inſtitutions, as God doth to his, by making them to conferGrace upon the rightly diſpoſed; and by *diminiſhing*, that the Service is not complete without it. This our Saviour condemn'd in the *Phariſees*, when they maintained that to *eat with unwaſhen Hands defiled a Man*, verſe 20. And this we condemn in the Church of *Rome*, in their uſe of Holy-Water, and Reliques and Ceremonies.

Thus far we agree; but if they proceed, and will conclude that the doing any thing not Commanded, in the Worſhip of God is a Sin though it have none of the ingredients in it before ſpoken of, we therein differ from them and upon very good reaſon. For therein they differ from our Saviour and his Apoſtles, and all Churches, as I have ſhewed. Therein alſo they depart from the notion and reaſon of the thing: For *adding* is adding to the ſubſtance, and making the thing added of the Nature of the thing its added to; and *diminiſhing* is diminiſhing from the ſubſtance, and taking away from the Nature of it; but when the ſubſtance remains intire, as much after this humane appointment as it was

before it, without Loſs and Prejudice, without Debaſement or Corruption, it cannot be called an addition to it, in the ſence that the Scripture takes that Word in.

Nay ſo far are we from admitting this charge, that we return it upon them, and do bring them in Criminals upon it. For thoſe that do Forbid what the Goſpel Forbids not, do as much add to it, as thoſe that Command what the Goſpel doth not Command: And if it be a Crime to Command what that Commands not, it muſt be ſo to Forbid what it Forbids not. And this is what they are Guilty of that do hold that *nothing is to be uſed in the Worſhip of God but what is preſcribed*, for if that be not a Scripture Propoſition and Truth (as certain it is not) then what an addition is this? A greater ſurely than what they charge upon us; for all that is Commanded amongſt us, is look'd upon not as neceſſary but expedient; but what is Forbid by them is Forbid as abſolutely unlawful; the latter of which alters the Nature, whereas the other only affects the circumſtances of things.

Object. III. The ſecond Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not make unto thee any Graven Image*, &c. is frequently made uſe of to prove that we muſt apply nothing to a Religious Uſe but what is Commanded; and we are told that the ſence of it is, that *We muſt Worſhip God in no other way, and by no other means or Religious Rites, than what he hath preſcribed.*

Anſwer. The beſt way to anſwer this is. 1. To conſider what is Forbidden in this Commandment, and 2. To ſhew that we are not concern'd in the Prohibition. As to the former,

1. In this Command it is provided, that there be no act of Adoration given to any beſides God. By this the Heathens are condemned in their Plurality of Gods, and the

the Church of *Rome* in the Veneration they give to Saints and Angels.

2. That the Honour we give to God be ſutable to his Nature, and agreeable to his Will. Sutable to his Nature; and ſo we are not to Worſhip him by Creatures, as the Sun, &c. for that is to conſider him as Finite; nor by Images and External Repreſentations, for that is to conſider him as Corporeal: Agreeable to his Will; and ſo we are Forbidden all other Worſhip of him than what he hath appointed. Its in the laſt of theſe we are concerned, for I believe there will be no attempt to prove that there is any thing in our Worſhip that doth derogate from the perfections of God, and is unſutable to his Nature, further than the defects that muſt ariſe from all Worſhip given by Creatures to a Creator. And if we come to conſider it as to what he hath revealed, there can be nothing deduced thence to prove Rites inſtituted by Men for the Solemnity of God's ſervice to be Forbidden; and which for ought I ſee is not attempted to be proved from this Commandment, or from Scripture elſe where, but by crowding ſuch Rites into and repreſenting them as a part of Divine Worſhip. This way goes one of the moſt induſtrious in this cauſe. *Ceremonies*, ſaith he, *are External Rites of Religious Worſhip, as uſed to further Devotion, and therefore being invented by Man are of the ſame Nature with Images, by which and at which God is Worſhipped.* In which are no leſs than three miſtakes. As 1. he makes whatever is uſed to further Devotion to be Religious Worſhip. 2. he makes it a fault in External Rites in Religious Worſhip that they are uſed to further Devotion 3. he makes External Rites taken up by Men, and uſed for that end to be of the ſame Nature with Images. If I ſhew that theſe are really miſtakes I think that in doing ſo the whole argument taken from the 2. Commandment

Ames. Freſh Suit, part. 2. ſect. 2. command. p. 228.

falls with it. 1. He mistakes, in that he makes *whatever is used to further Devotion to be Religious Worship*: The error of which will appear from this consideration; that all things relating to Divine Worship are either Parts or Adjuncts of it; Parts, as Prayer, and the Lord's Supper; Adjuncts, as Form and Posture. Now Adjuncts are not Parts, because the Worship is intire and invariable in all the Parts of it, and remains the same though the Adjuncts vary. Prayer is Worship, whether with a Form or without; and the Lord's Supper is Worship, whether Persons Kneel, Sit, or Stand in the receiving of it. And yet though the Adjuncts are no part of Worship, they further Devotion in it. This those that are for conceived Prayer plead for Their Practice, and this also is pleaded by those that are for a Form. This do they urge that are for Sitting at the Lord's Supper, and this they say that are for Kneeling; so that these and the like Adjuncts do further Devotion, and are for Edification, is an argument used by both. Now if Adjuncts are not part of Worship and may be yet used to further Devotion, then the furthering Devotion by any Rite doth not in it self make that Rite so used to be Worship. I acknowledge there is False Worship as well as True; True Worship is of Divine Institution, and False Worship is of Humane Appointment; and becomes Worship when either Divine Institution is pretended for it, or its used for the same special ends that God's Worship is instituted for, that is, as necessary to acceptance, or as a means of Grace. And so I confess Adjuncts may be made parts of False Worship, as many Ceremonies are in the Church of *Rome*; but this is not the case with any things used in the Administration of Worship in our Church; we plead nothing of Divine Authority to enforce them, use them not as necessary, nor as means of Grace; after the manner we do the Word of God, and the Sacraments. 2. Its another mistake, that its

its charged as a fault upon Rites in Worſhip, that *They are uſed to further Devotion.* Without this end ſurely they are not to be uſed, or at leaſt not to be encouraged; for Divine Worſhip being the acknowledgment of God and a giving Honour to Him, ſhould have all things about it Grave and Solemn, that may beſt ſute it, and promote the ends for which its uſed, But if Rites are uſed in it that have no reſpect to ſuch ends, they become Vain and Trifling, neither worthy of that nor our Defence. And therefore we juſtly blame the Church of *Rome* for the Multitude of Ceremonies uſed in their Worſhip, and for ſuch that either have no ſignification, or whoſe ſignification is ſo obſcure as is not eaſie to be obſerved or traced, and that rather hinder than further Devotion. Surely it would not ſo well anſwer the end if the Hand in Swearing was laid upon another Book, as when on the Goſpel; nor if the Love-feaſts at the Lord's Supper had been only as a Common Meal, without reſpect to Charity ſignified by it. 3. Its another miſtake that *External Rites taken up by Men, and uſed for the furthering Devotion are made to be of the ſame Nature with Images.* This there is no foundation for, for the Religious uſe of Images is expreſly contrary to the Command of God, and Forbidden, becauſe it tends to debaſe God in the thoughts of thoſe that Worſhip him by ſuch mediums. But there is nothing in the uſe of ſuch External Rites (as are before ſpoken of) that fall under the cenſure of either of theſe; but that we may lawfully uſe them, and the uſe of which is not therefore at all Forbidden in the 2. Commandment.

If there be not a Rule for all things belonging to the Worſhip of God, the Goſpel would be leſs perfect than the Law; and Chriſt would not be ſo Faithful as *Moſes*, in the care of his Church, *Heb.* 3. 2. which is not to be ſuppoſed. *Object. IV.*

The

Answer. The ſufficiency of Scripture and Faithfulneſs of Chriſt are not to be judged of by what we fancy they ſhould have determined, but by what they have. Its a plauſible Plea made by the Church of *Rome* for an Infallible Judge in matters of Faith, that by an Appeal to him all controverſies would be decided, and the Peace of the Church ſecured. But notwithſtanding all the advantages which they ſo hugely amplify, there is not one Word in Scripture (which in a matter of that importance is abſolutely neceſſary) that doth ſhew that it is neceſſary; or (were it ſo) who the Perſon or Perſons are that ſhould have this Power or Commiſſion. And in this caſe we muſt be content to leave things as the Wiſdom of God hath thought fit to leave them, and to go on in the old way of ſober and amicable debate and fair reaſoning to bring debates to a concluſion. Thus it is in the matter before us, the pretence is very Popular and Plauſible, that, Who can better determine things Relating to the Worſhip of God, than God whoſe Worſhip it is? And where may we expect to find them better determined than in his Word, which is ſufficient to all the ends it was writ for? But when we come to enquire into the caſe, we find no ſuch thing done, no ſuch care taken, no ſuch particular directions as they had under the Law; and therefore its certain that neither the ſufficiency of Scripture, nor Faithfulneſs of Chriſt ſtand upon that foundation. And if we do not find the like particular preſcriptions in Baptiſm as Circumciſion; nor in the Lord's Supper as in the Paſſover; nor in Prayers as in Sacrifices; its plain that the ſufficiency of Scripture and Faithfulneſs of Chriſt do reſpect ſomewhat elſe, and that they are not the leſs for the want of them. Chriſt was Faithful, as *Moſes*, *To him that appointed him*, in performing what belonged to him as a Mediator (in which

which reſpect *Moſes* was a Type of him) and diſcovering to Mankind in Scripture the method and means by which they might be Sav'd; and the ſufficiency of Scripture is in being a ſufficient means to that end, and putting Men into ſuch State as will render them capable of attaining to it. And as for modes and circumſtances of things they are left to the prudence of thoſe who by the Grace and the Word of God have been converted to the Truth, and have received it in the Love of it. I have been the larger in the conſideration of this principle, *viz.* that *Nothing but what is preſcribed may be lawfully uſed in Divine Worſhip*, that I might relieve the conſciences of thoſe that are Inſnared by it, and that cannot be ſo, without ſubjecting themſelves to great inconveniences. For if nothing but what is of that Nature may be uſed or joyned with, and that the ſecond Commandment doth with as much Authority Forbid the uſe of any thing not Commanded, as the Worſhipping of Images: If *Nadab*'s and *Abihu*'s Strange Fire, and *Uzza*'s touching of the Ark be examples Recorded for caution to us, and that every thing Uncommanded, is of the like Nature, attended with the like Aggravations, and alike do expoſe to God's Diſpleaſure: If the uſe of any thing not preſcribed be ſuch an addition to the Word of God, as leaves us under the Penalty of that Text; *If any Man ſhall add unto theſe things, God ſhall add unto him the Plagues that are Written in this Book*; we cannot be too cautious in the Examination of what is, or what is not preſcribed. But withall if this be our caſe, it would be more intolerable than that of the *Jews*. For amongſt them every thing for the moſt part was plainly laid down, and though the particular Rites and Circumſtances preſcribed in their Service were many, yet they were ſufficiently deſcrib'd in their Law, and it was but conſulting that, or Thoſe whoſe

Rev. 22. 18.

whoſe Office and Employment it was to be well verſed in it, and they might be preſently inform'd, and as ſoon ſee it as the Book was laid open. This they all agreed in. But it is not ſo under the Goſpel, and there is no greater proof of it than the ſeveral ſchemes drawn up for Diſcipline, and Order, by thoſe that have been of that Opinion and made ſome attempts to deſcribe them. And then when things are thus dark and obſcure, ſo hard to trace and diſcover, that it has thus perplexed and baffled thoſe that have made it their buſineſs to bring theſe things within Scripture Rules, how perplexed muſt they be that are not skilled in it; And (as I have above ſhewed) muſt all their Days live in the Communion, its likely, of no Church; ſince though a Church ſhould have nothing in it but what is preſcribed, yet it would take up a great deal of time to examine, and more to be ſatisfied that all in it is preſcribed.

3. I ſhall conſider, *How we may know what things are Indifferent in the Worſhip of God?* I may anſwer, to this that we may know what is Indifferent in the Worſhip of God by the ſame Rule that we may know what is Indifferent out of Worſhip, that is, if the thing to be enquired after be neither required nor Forbidden: For the Nature of Indifferency is always the ſame, and what it is in one kind or inſtance, it is in all; and if the want of a Law to Require or Forbid doth make a thing Indifferent in Natural or Civil matters, it doth alſo the ſame in Religious: And in things Forbidden by Humane Authority, the not being required in Scripture; and in things required by Humane Authority the not being Forbidden in Scripture is a Rule we may ſafely determine the caſe, and judge of the Lawfulneſs and Indifferency of things in *Divine Worſhip by*. But I confeſs the Queſtion requires a more particular Anſwer, becauſe things in their Nature Lawful and Indifferent,

may

may yet, in their uſe and application, become unlawful. As it is in Civil caſes and Secular matters, to be Covered or Uncovered is a thing in it ſelf Indifferent; but to be Covered in the preſence of ſuch of our Betters, as Cuſtom and Law have made it our Duty to ſtand bare before, would be unlawful, and it would be no excuſe for ſuch an Omiſſion and Contempt, that the thing is in it ſelf Indifferent. And then much more will this hold where the caſe is of an higher Nature; as it is in the Worſhip of God, where things in themſelves Indifferent may become Ridiculous, Abſurd and Profane, and argue rather contempt of God than reverence for him in the Perſons uſing them. Again, the things may, though Grave and Pertinent, yet be ſo numerous that they may obſcure and oppreſs the Service, and confound and diſtract the Mind that ſhould attend to the Obſervation of them; and ſo for one reaſon or another are not to be allowed in the Solemnities of Religion. Therefore in Anſwer to the Queſtion, I ſhall add,

1. That things Indifferent are ſo called from their general Nature, and not as if in practice and uſe, and all manner of caſes, they always were ſo, and never unlawful; for that they may be by Accident and Circumſtance; being lawful unlawful, expedient or inexpedient, as they are uſed and applied.

2. I obſerve that there are ſeveral Laws which things Indifferent do reſpect; and that may be Required or Forbidden by one Law, which is not Forbidden or Required by another; and that may be Indifferent in one State which is Unlawful in another, and by paſſing out of one into the other may ceaſe to be Indifferent, and therefore when we ſay things are Indifferent, we muſt underſtand of what Rank they are, and what Law they do reſpect; As for example, Humane Converſation,

and Religious Worſhip are different Ranks to which things are referred; and therefore what may be Indifferent in Converſation may be unlawful in Worſhip. Thus to Enterchange Diſcourſe about Common Affairs is a thing lawful in it ſelf, and uſeful in its place; but when practiſed in the Church and in the midſt of Religious Solemnities is Criminal. This diſtinction of Ranks and States of things is uſeful and neceſſary to be obſerved, and which if obſerved would have prevented the objection made by ſome, that if a Church or Authority may Command Indifferent things, then they may require us to Pray Standing upon the head, *&c.* for that though Indifferent in another caſe is not in that, as being unſutable to it.

3. Therefore we muſt come to ſome Rules in Divine Worſhip, by which we may know what things in their Nature Indifferent, are therein alſo Indifferent, and may be lawfully uſed: It being not enough to plead they are Indifferent in themſelves (as ſome unwarily do) and therefore preſently they may be uſed; For by the ſame reaſon a Perſon may Spit in anothers Face, may keep on his Hat before the King, *&c.* the Spitting and being Covered being in their Nature Indifferent. But now as there are certain Rules which we are to reſpect in Common and Civil Converſation, and which even in that caſe do tye us up in the uſe of things otherwiſe Indifferent: So it is as reaſonable, and muſt be much more allowed that there are ſome Rules of the like Nature which we muſt have a regard to in the Adminiſtration of Divine Worſhip. And as in Common matters, the Nature of the thing; in actions the end; in Converſation the circumſtances are to be heeded, *viz.* Time, Place, Perſons; as when, where, before whom we are Covered or Uncovered, *&c.* So in Sacred matters; the Nature of the thing, in the Decency and Solemnity

lemnity of the Worſhip; the end for which it was appointed, in the Edification of the Church; and the Peace, Glory, and Security of that, in its Order are to be reſpected. And according to theſe Rules and the circumſtances of things, are we to Judge of the Indifferency, Lawfulneſs, or Expediency of things uſed in the Service of God; and as they do make for or againſt, and do approach to or recede from theſe Characters, ſo they are to be rejected or obſerved, and the more or leſs eſteemed. But yet we are not come to a concluſion, for 1. Theſe are general Rules, and ſo the particulars are not ſo eaſily pointed to. 2. Decency, and Edification, and Order are (as was obſerved before) Variable and Uncertain, and depend upon Circumſtances, and ſo in their Nature not eaſily determined. And, 3. Perſons have very different Opinions about what is Decent, Edifying, and Orderly; as in the Apoſtles time in the Church of *Rome* ſome were for, and others againſt the Obſervation of Days; and in the Church of *Corinth*, ſome doubtleſs were for being Covered, others for being Uncovered in Divine Worſhip. And therefore there is ſomewhat further requiſite to give Satisfaction in the point; and by which we may be able to Judge what is Decent, Edifying, and Orderly; as well as we are by what is Decent, *&c.* to Determine what is fit to be uſed in Religious Worſhip. And this we may be help'd in by conſidering,

1. That ſome things make ſo Eminently for, or are ſo Notoriouſly oppoſite to theſe Rules, that Common Reaſon will be able forthwith to Judge of them, and to declare for or againſt them. So when the Love-feaſts, and the Lord's Supper were appointed for the teſtifying and increaſe of mutual Charity; if one took his Supper before another, it was to make it rather a private Meal than a Religious Feaſt, and ſo was a Notori- 1 Cor. 11. 20, 21.

ous Breach of Order and Chriſtian Fellowſhip. So a Tumultuous ſpeaking of many together is leſs for Edification, and hath more of Confuſion than the Orderly ſpeaking of one by one. And Service in an Unknown Tongue doth leſs conduce to Edification than when it is in a Language Vulgarly known and Underſtood; this is a caſe that Reaſon as well as the Apoſtle doth Determine to our Hands, and which Mankind would with one conſent ſoon agree to, were it not for a certain Church in the World that carries thoſe of its Communion, againſt Senſe, Reaſon, and Nature, for its own advantage.

1 Cor. 14.16, 17. 26, 27.

2. But there are other things which are not ſo Clear and Evident, and ſo the caſe needs further conſideration. For the clearing of which we may obſerve,

1. That we are not ſo much to Judge of Decency, Order, and Edification aſunder, as together; theſe having a mutual Relation to and dependance upon each other. So its well obſerved by St. *Chryſoſtom*, *That nothing doth ſo much Edify, as Order, Peace and Love:* And the Apoſtle when he had reproved the Diſorders of their Service in the Church of *Corinth* concludes it, *Let all things be done to Edifying.* The not obſerving of this is the occaſion of very great Miſtakes in this matter; For Perſons when they would Judge of Edification conſider preſently what they conceive doth moſt improve them in Knowledge or any particular Grace; and having no further conſideration, for the ſake of this throw down the Bounds of publick Order and bring all into Confuſion; and for Edifying (as they apprehend) themſelves do Diſturb if not Deſtroy the Church of God, and render the means uſed in it ineffectual to themſelves and others. Thus again they Judge of what is Decent, and Indecent; and conclude that there is no Indecency in Sitting, ſuppoſe at the

Chryſ. in 1 Cor. Ch. 14. 40. 1 Cor. 14. 26.

the Sacrament, or the Prayers; but they miſtake in ſuch a conception, whileſt what is againſt publick Order and Practice, is for that reaſon Indecent, were there no other reaſon to make it ſo. So that if we would Judge aright of either of theſe we muſt Judge of them together; and as Order alone is not enough to make a thing Decent which is in it ſelf Indecent; ſo Decency or particular Edification is not enough to recommend that which is not to be Introduced or Obtained without the Diſturbance and Overthrow of publick Order and Peace.

2. When the caſe is not apparent, we ſhould rather Judge by what is contrary than by what is agreeable to thoſe Rules. We know better what things are not than what they are: And if Chriſtians ſhould never agree to any thing in the External Adminiſtration of Divine Worſhip till they agree in the notion of Decency, Order, and Edification; or till they can prove that the things uſed, or required to be uſed in a Church, do exactly agree to the Notion and Definition of it; Worſhip muſt never be Adminiſtred, or the greater part of Chriſtians muſt Exclude themſelves from it. And yet this muſt be done before it can be poſitively ſaid (unleſs in things very manifeſt) that this is Decent, or that is Orderly, &c. Theſe things as I have ſaid are variable, and depend upon Circumſtances; and ſo Perſons muſt needs be Wonderfully Confounded if they come to Niceties and inſiſt upon them. And therefore as we better know what is Indecent than Decent, Diſorderly than Orderly, againſt than for Edification, ſo its better to take the courſe aboveſaid in Judging about it. As for inſtance, if we would enquire into the Decency of the Poſture to be uſed in the Lord's Supper, or the Edification that may ariſe from it; ſome will ſay its beſt to receive it in the Poſture frequently uſed in the Devotions

ons of the ancient Church of Standing or Incurvation; others would chooſe Sitting, as the diſſenting Parties amongſt us, and ſome Forreign Churches; others be for the Poſture of Kneeling uſed in ours and many more, and all with ſome ſhew of reaſon. In theſe different caſes it may not perhaps be ſo eaſy for a Perſon (Educated in a different way from what is Practiſed and Preſcribed) to Judge of the Decency or Edification; but if he find it not Indecent, or Deſtructive of Piety, and of the ends for which the Ordinance was Inſtituted, he is therewith to ſatisfy himſelf. St. *Auſtin* puts a like caſe and gives the like anſwer. *Some Churches Faſt on the Saturday, becauſe Chriſt's Body was then in the Grave, and he in a State of Humiliation. Others do Eat on the Saturday, both becauſe that Day God Reſted from his Work, and Chriſt Reſted in the Grave.* And how in ſuch a caſe to Determine our ſelves, both in Opinion and Practice, that Father thus directs, *If* ſaith he, *what is injoyned be not againſt Faith, or good Manners, it is to be accounted Indifferent.* And I may add, if it be not Indecent, Diſorderly and Deſtructive of Piety, its lawful.

Epiſt. 118.

3. If the caſe be not apparent, and we cannot eaſily find out how the things uſed and injoyned in a Church are Decent, &c. we are to conſider that we are in, or Obliged to be of a Church, and that theſe things do reſpect ſuch a Society; and therefore are to be Cautious how we Condemn this or that for Indecent, Confuſed, and Inexpedient, when we ſee Chriſtians agreeing in the Practice of them, and ſuch whom for other things we cannot Condemn. When we find if we argue againſt it, they argue for it, and produce Experience againſt Experience, and Reaſon againſt Reaſon, and that we have a whole Church againſt our particular conceptions of things of this Nature; we ſhould be apt to think the Fault may be in our ſelves, and that its for want of Under-

Underſtanding and Inſight, for want of Uſe and Tryal, and by Reaſon of ſome Prejudices or Prepoſſeſſions that we thus differ in our Judgment from them. We ſee what little things do Determin Men ordinarily in theſe matters; how addicted ſome are to their own Ways and Cuſtoms, and forward to Like or Condemn according to their Education, which doth form their conceptions and fix their inclinations; how Prone again others are to Novelty and Innovation. So St. *Auſtin* obſerves, ſome warmly contend for an uſage, *becauſe its the Cuſtom of their own Church; as if they come, ſuppoſe into another Place where Lent is obſerved without any Relaxation, they however refuſe to Faſt, becauſe its not ſo done in their Country.* There are others again do like, and are bent upon a particular Rite or Uſage, *Becauſe*, ſaith he, *they obſerv'd this in their Travels abroad, and ſo a Perſon is for it, as perhaps he would be thought ſo much the more Learned and Conſiderable, as he is diſtant or doth diſagree from what is obſerved at home.* Now when Perſons are Prone thus to Judge upon ſuch little Reaſons, and may miſtake in their Judgment, and do Judge againſt a Church (which they have no other Reaſon againſt) it would become them to think again; and to think that the caſe perhaps requires only time or uſe to wear off their Prejudices, and that by theſe ways they may as effectually be reconciled to the things Practiſed in a Church, as they are to the Civil Uſages and the Habits of a Nation, which at the firſt they looked upon in their kind as Indecent and Inexpedient, as they can do of the Uſages of a Church in theirs. As ſuppoſe the Diſpute ſhould be about Forms of Prayer, or the uſe of reſponſals in it, we ſee that Decency, Order, and Edification are pleaded by the Parties contending for and againſt, but when a Perſon conſiders that whatever Opinion he therein hath, yet if he be againſt them, Epiſt. 118.

them, he is at the ſame time againſt all formed Churches in the World, he may conclude ſafely that there is a Decency, Order, and Expediency in the Publick uſe of them; and as St. *Auſtin* ſaith of a Chriſtian living in *Rome* where they faſted upon the Saturday that *ſuch a one ſhould not ſo praiſe a Chriſtian City for it, as to Condemn the Chriſtian World that was againſt it*; ſo we ſhould not be ſo Zealous againſt a Practice, as to Condemn thoſe that are for it, and be ſo addicted to our own Opinion as to ſet that againſt a Community and a Church, nay againſt all Churches whatſoever. This will give us reaſon to ſuſpect its a *Zeal without Knowledge* when we preſume to ſet our Judgment, Reaſon, and Experience, againſt the Judgment, Reaſon and Experience of the Chriſtian World. Which brings to the Fourth General.

Epiſt. 86. Caſulano.

4. *How are we to determine our ſelves in the uſe of Indifferent things with reſpect to the Worſhip of God?* For reſolution of which, we are to conſider our ſelves in a threefold Capacity. 1. As particular Perſons, ſolitary and alone. 2. As we are in Ordinary and Civil Converſation. 3. As we are Members of a Publick Society or Church.

In the firſt capacity, every Chriſtian may chuſe and act as he pleaſeth; and all Lawful things remain to him, as they are in their own Nature, Free. He may eat this or that; chuſe this day or another, and ſet it apart for the Service of God and his own ſoul. In this ſtate, where there is no Law of man to require, he may forbear to uſe what is Indifferent; where there is no Law to forbid, he may freely uſe it.

In the ſecond capacity, as in Converſation with others, he is to have a regard to them, and to uſe his Liberty ſo as ſhall be leſs to the prejudice, and more to the benefit of thoſe he converſes with. So ſaith the Apoſtle,

Apoſtle, *all things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things Edify not.* In this capacity Men are ſtill in their own Power; and whilſt its no Sin they may ſafely act, and where its no Sin they may forbear in complyance with thoſe that are not yet advanced to the ſame Maturity of Judgement with themſelves; as the Apoſtle did, *Though* ſaith he, *I be free from all Men, yet have I made my ſelf Servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the* Jews *I became a* Jew, &c. In ſuch a caſe the ſtrong ſhould not deſpiſe, affront, or diſcourage the weak; nor the weak cenſure and condemn the ſtrong. 1 Cor. 10. 2 1 Cor. 9. 19. &c.

In the third Capacity, as we are Members of a Church and Religious Society, ſo the uſe of Indifferent things comes under further conſideration, ſince then the Practice of a Church and the Commands of Authority are to be reſpected. And as what we may lawfully do when alone, we are not to do in Converſation, becauſe of Offence: So what we may allowably do when alone or in Converſation, we muſt not do in Society, if Forbidden by the Laws and Cuſtoms of it. For the ſame reaſon (if there was no more) that Reſtrains or Determines us in Converſation, is as much more forcible in Society, as the Peace and Welfare of the whole is to be preferred before that of a part; And if the not grieving a Brother, or endangering his Soul makes it reaſonable, juſt, and neceſſary to forego our Liberty, and to Reſtrain our ſelves in the exerciſe of it, then much more is the Peace of a Church (upon which the preſent Welfare of the whole, and the Future Welfare of many depend) a ſufficient reaſon for ſo doing, and to Oblige us to act or not to act accordingly. The Apoſtle ſaith, *Let every one of us pleaſe his Neighbour for his good to Edification*, that is, to his Improvement in Knowledge Rom. 15. 2.

or Grace, or Christian Piety, and the promoting of Christian Concord and Charity: Now Edification is eminently so with respect to the whole, as the Church is *the House of God*, and every Christian one of the
1 Pet. 2. 5. *living Stones* of which that Spiritual building is compacted; and so he is to consider himself, as well as he is to be considered, as a part of it, and to study what may be for the Edification of the whole, as well as the good of any particular Member of it. And how is that but by promoting Love, Peace, and Order, and taking
2 Cor. 10. 8. Care to Preserve it? So we find Edification Opposed
1 Cor. 14. 26. to Destruction, to Confusion, to Disputacity and Licen-
1 Tim. 1. 4. tiousness: And on the contrary, we find Peace and
Rom. 14. 19. Edifying, Comfort and Edification, Union and Edifi-
1 Thes. 5. 11. cation joyned together, as the one doth promote the
Eph. 4. 12. 16. other. And therefore as the Good and Edification of the whole is to be always in our Eye, so its the Rule by which we ought to act in all things lawful; and to that end should comply with its Customs, observe its Directions, and Obey its Orders, without Reluctancy and Opposition. Thus the Apostle resolves the case, Writing about publick Order and the Custom newly taken up of Worshipping Uncovered, *if any Man seem*, or have a mind
1 Cor. 11. 16. *to be, contentious, we have no such Custom, neither the Churches of God*; looking upon that as sufficient to put an end to all Contentions and Debates; that whatever might be Plausibly urged against it, from the *Jewish* Practice, and the Representation even of Angels adoring after that manner; and from the reason of the thing as a signification of Shame and Reverence; or from the Practice of Idolators that did many of them Worship Uncovered; yet he peremptorily concludes, *We have no such Custom*, &c. The Peace of the Church is to a Peaceable Mind sufficient to put an end to all Disputes about it; and the Peace of the Church depending upon the

the Obſervation of its Cuſtoms, that is infinitely to be preferred before Scrupuloſity and Niceneſs, or a meer inclination to a contrary Practice. For in publick caſes a Man is not to go his own way, or to have his own mind, for that would bring in Confuſion (one Man having as much a right as another.) There muſt be ſomewhat Eſtabliſhed, ſome Common Order and Bond of Union; and if Confuſion is before ſuch Eſtabliſhment, then to break that Eſtabliſhment, would bring in Confuſion; and where that is likely to enſue it is not worth the while for the trial of a new experiment to decry and throw down what is already Eſtabliſhed or Uſed in a Church, becauſe we think better of another; for ſaith a Grave Author, and well Skill'd in theſe matters, *The very change of a Cuſtom though it may happen to profit, yet doth diſturb by its Novelty.* Aug. Epiſt. 118. Publick Peace is worth all new Offers (if the Church is Diſquieted and its Peace Endangered by them) though in themſelves better; and it is better to labour under the infirmity of publick Order than the miſchief of being without it, or, what is next to that, the trial of ſome Form, ſeemingly of a better Caſt and Mould that hath not yet been experimented. I ſay it again, Infirmity in a Church is better than Confuſion, or Deſtruction which is the Conſequent of it: And I had rather chooſe that as I would a Houſe, to have one with ſome Faults, rather than to have none at all; And if I cannot have them mended (when tolerable) I think my ſelf bound not only to bear with them, but to do all I can for its preſervation though with them, and to obſerve all things that are lawful for its ſuppore and encouragement. In doing thus I ſerve God, and his Church, my own Soul and the Souls of others, promote Religion and Charity in the World; *For God is not the Author of Confuſion but of Peace in all the* 1 Cor. 14. 33.

Churches of the Saints. In things which neither we nor the Worſhip are the worſe for, but the Church the better for obſerving, Peace and Order is far to be prefer'd before Niceties: And certainly neither we nor the Service of God can be the worſe for what God hath concluded nothing in. What the Goſpel looks at is the Main and Eſſential parts of Religion in Doctrine, Worſhip and Practice. And if theſe be Secured, we are under no Obligation to contend for or againſt the modes and circumſtances of things further than the Churches Order and Peace is concerned in them. So the Apoſtle,

Rom. 14. 16. *Let not your Good be Evil ſpoken of: For the Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink, but Righteouſneſs, Peace, and Joy in the Holy-Ghoſt*; the promoting Love and Charity, and ſubſtantiul Righteouſnes. *He that in theſe things Serveth Chriſt is acceptable to God, and approved of Men.*

Aug. Epiſt. 86. "The Beauty of the Kings Daughter is with-"in, ſaith St. *Auſtin*, and all its obſervations are "but its veſture, which though various in different "Churches, are no prejudice to the Common Faith, "nor to him that uſeth them. And therefore what he and his Mother received from St. *Ambroſe*, and looked upon as a Divine Oracle, is worthy to be recommended to all, *That in all things not contrary to Truth and good Manners, it becometh a Good and Prudent Chriſtian to Practiſe according to the Cuſtom of the Church where he comes, if he will not be a Scandal to them, nor have them to be a Scandal to him.*

Epiſt. 118. & 86.

And if the Cuſtom and Practice of a Church ſhould be thus taken into conſideration by a Good Man, then certainly much more ought it ſo to be, when that is Eſtabliſhed, and is made a Law, and is backed by Authority: For then to ſtand in Oppoſition is not only an Offence but an Affront; and to inſiſt upon the Gratifying our own Inclination againſt publick Order, is to contend whether we or our Superiours ſhall Govern, whether

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our Will or the publick Good and Order muſt take place And what can be the Iſſue of ſuch a temper but the diſtraction if not Diſſolution of Government; which as it cannot be without Governed as well as Governours, ſo cannot be preſerved without the ſubmiſſion of the Governed in all lawful things to the Governours; and the permitting them to chooſe and determine in things of that kind as theyſhall ſee meet. Its pleaded *That there ſhould be a Liberty left to Chriſtians in things Undetermined in Scripture*, and ſuch things indeed there are that Chriſtians may have a Liberty in and yet hold Communion, as in Poſture, &c. (though Decency would plead for Uniformity in thoſe things alſo) but there are other things, which they muſt agree in, or elſe there can be no publick Worſhip or Chriſtian Communion, which yet they differ in as much as the other. As now whether Worſhip is to be celebrated with or without a Form; whether the Lords Supper is to be received in the Morning or Evening; whether Prayers ſhould be long or ſhort, &c. Now unleſs one of theſe diſagreeing Parties doth Yield to the other or there be a Power in Superiours and Guides to determine for them, and they are to ſubmit to them in it, there will be nothing but confuſion. And why Superiours may not then Command and why Inferiours are not to obey in all things of the like kind; In Poſture or Habit, as well as the time (above ſpecified) and Forms, I underſtand not.

To conclude this, if we find any thing required or generally practiſed in a Church, that is not Forbidden in Scripture; or any thing Omitted or Forbidden in a Church, that is not required in Scripture; we may and ought to act or to forbear as they that are of its Communion do generally act or forbear, or the Laws of that Communion require; and in ſuch things are to be determined

mined by the publick Voice of the Communion, that is, Authority, Custom, or the Majority.

Object. But to this it will be said, If we are thus to be determined in our Practice, then where is our Christian Liberty, which being only in Indifferent things, if we are restrained in the use of them, we are also restrained in our Liberty, which yet the Apostle exhorts Christians to *stand fast in.*

Gal 5. 1.

Answer. 1. This is no argument to those that say there is nothing Indifferent in the Worship of God; for then there is nothing in it matter of Christian Liberty;

2. A restraint of our Liberty, or receding from it is, of it self, no violation of it. All persons grant this in the latter, and the most scrupulous are apt to plead that the Strong ought to bear with the Weak, and to give no Offence to them by indulging themselves in that Liberty which others are afraid to take. But now if a Person may recede from his Liberty, and is bound so to do in the case of Scandal, and yet his Liberty be not thereby infringed, why may it not be also little infringed, when restrained by others? How can it be supposed, that there should be so vast a difference betwixt restraint and restraint, and that he that is restrained by Authority should have his Liberty prejudiced, and yet he that is restrained *By anothers Conscience* (as the Apostle saith) should keep it intire? And if it should be said this is Occasional, but the other is perpetuated by the Order, perhaps, of a Church. I answer, that all Orders about Indifferent things are but temporary, and are only intended to bind so long as they are for the good of the Community. And if they are for continuance that alters not the case; For though the Apostle knew his own Liberty and where there was Just Reason could insist upon it, yet he did not suppose that could be damnified, though for his whole life it was restrain'd.

1 Cor. 10. 29.

reſtrain'd. For thus he reſolves, *If meat make my Brother to offend, I will eat no fleſh while the World ſtandeth*, which certainly he would not have condeſcended to, if ſuch a practice was not reconcileable to his Exhortation of *ſtanding faſt in that Liberty*, &c. 1 Cor. 8. 13.

3. Therefore to find out the tendency of his Exhortation, its fit to underſtand what Chriſtian Liberty is, and that is truly no other than the Liberty which Mankind naturally had, before it was reſtrain'd by particular Inſtitution; and which is call'd Chriſtian Liberty in oppoſition to the *Jews* which had it not under their Law, but were reſtrain'd from the practice and uſe of things, otherwiſe and in themſelves Lawful, by ſevere Prohibitions. Now as all the World was then divided into *Jews* and *Gentiles*, ſo the Liberty which the *Jews* were before denied, was call'd Chriſtian, becauſe by the coming of Chriſt, all theſe former reſtraints were taken off, and all the World, both *Jews* and *Gentiles* did enjoy it. And therefore when the Apoſtle doth exhort them to *ſtand faſt in it*, it was, as the Scope of the Epiſtle doth ſhew, to warn them againſt returning to that *Jewiſh* ſtate, and againſt thoſe who held it neceſſary for both *Jew* and *Gentile* ſtill to obſerve all the Rites and Orders of it. Now if the Uſages of a Church were of the ſame kind, or had the ſame tendency, or were alike neceſſarily impos'd as thoſe of the *Moſaical* Law, then Chriſtians would be concerned in the Apoſtles Exhortation; but where theſe reaſons are not, our Liberty is not at all prejudiced by compliance with them. As long I ſay, as they are neither peccant in their Nature, nor End, nor Number, they are not unlawful to us, nor is our Liberty injured in the uſe of them. And ſo I am brought to the laſt General, which is,

V. That there is nothing required in our Church, which

which is not either a duty in it ſelf, and ſo neceſſary to all Chriſtians, or elſe what is indifferent, and ſo may be lawfully uſed by them. By things required, I mean, ſuch as are uſed in the Communion and Service of our Church, and impoſed upon the Lay-members of it (for theſe are the things my Subject doth more eſpecially reſpect.) This is a Subject too Copious for me to follow through all the particulars of it; and indeed it will be needleſs for me to enlarge upon it, if the foundation I have laid be good, and the Rules before given are fit meaſures for us to Judge of the lawfulneſs, or unlawfulneſs of things by; for by theſe we ſhall ſoon bring the Cauſe to an Iſſue. I think there is nothing to be charged upon our Church for being defective in any Eſſential part of Divine Worſhip (as the Church of *Rome* is in its Half-Communion) nor of any practice that is apparently inconſiſtent with, or that doth defeat the ends of any Inſtitution (as the ſame Church doth offend by having its Service in an unknown Tongue, and in the multitude of its Ceremonies). I think it will be acknowledged, that the Word of God is ſincerely and freely Preached, the Sacraments intirely and truly Adminiſtred, the Prayers for matter inoffenſive and good. And therefore the matter in diſpute is about the Miniſtration of our Worſhip, and the manner of its performance; and I think the things of that kind Objected againſt, refer either to Time, or Forms, or Geſture. To Times, ſuch are Feſtivals, or Days ſet apart for Divine Service; to Forms ſuch are our Prayers, and the Adminiſtration of our Sacraments; to Geſtures, as Standing up at the Creed or Goſpels, and Kneeling at the Lords Supper. But now all theſe are either Natural or Moral Circumſtances of Action, and which, as I have ſhew'd, are inſeparable from it. Of the former kind are Days and Geſtures; of the latter

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are Forms of Administration, and so upon the reasons before given may be lawfully determined and used. Again, these are not forbidden by any Law, either expressly, or consequentially, and have nothing that is indecent, disorderly, or unedifying in them; and which if any should engage his own opinion and experience in, he would be answered in the like kind, and have the opinions and experience of Thousands that live in the practise of these, to contradict him. And if there be nothing of this kind apparent, or what can be plainly prov'd, (as I am apt to believe there cannot) then the Proposition I have laid down needs no further proof. But if at last it must issue in things inexpedient to Christians, or an unlawfulness in the Imposure; are either of these fit to be insisted upon, when the peace of one of the best Churches in the World is broken by it, a lamentable Schism kept up, and our Religion brought into imminent hazard by both? Alas how near have we been to ruin, and I wish I had no reason to say, how near are we to it, considering the indefatigable industry, the united endeavours, the matchless policy of those that contrive and desire it! Can we think that we are safe, as long as there is such an abiding reason to make us suspect it, and that our divisions are both fomented, and made use of by them to destroy us? And if this be our danger, and Union as necessary as desirable, shall we yet make the breach wider, or irreparable by an obstinate contention? God forbid! *O pray for the peace of* Jerusalem, *they shall prosper that love thee: Let peace be within thy Walls, and prosperity within thy Palaces.* Amen.

THE END.

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